AN ABRIDGMENT OF THE OBSERVATIONS ON THE DISPUTE BETWEEN THE United States and France,

ADDRESSED

BY *ROBERT GOODLOE HARPER, Esq.*

ONE OF THE REPRESENTATIVES IN CONGRESS

FOR THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA,

TO HIS CONSTITUENTS, IN MAY, 1797.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Abridgment is made from a pamphlet, which has not only been universally read and admired, but noticed in both Houses of Parliament with much approbation: its merit has already called for *seven* Editions.

The *original* is intitled "OBSERVATIONS ON THE DISPUTE BETWEEN "THE UNITED STATES AND FRANCE, written by ROBERT GOODLOE "HARPER, Esq." a lawyer of eminence in South Carolina, who, in the year 1795, was elected one of the Representatives in Congress of that State; and was, as he informs us himself, in the beginning of the French revolution, a warm friend to that measure, and to the nation of France; but when from the insidious attempts of the French Directory, through three successive ministers, he saw that they wanted to draw America into a war, and take a side with them against this country, he, at once, renounced his predilection in their favor, and, by a manliness of spirit, becoming a true friend of his country, openly opposed their views in Congress.

The professed intention of this Pamphlet to his constituents, was to *expose* the injustice of the French Directory towards America; yet it contains so many important observations applicable to this country; so many new and unanswerable proofs of the *unavoidable* necessity of our war with France, and of the unprovoked aggressions of that country against us, that it has been thought adviseable to compress it into a compass so narrow as to reduce its price within the reach of all orders of people in the kingdom.

This has been done in the present Abridgment, in which the passages that relate locally to America are omitted, and those only retained that regard this country, and the other powers of Europe.

From the observations and facts detailed by Mr. HARPER, as well as from the universal and unremitted intrigues of the French Government, one fact is obvious, and a fact that *every Englishman* ought to be sensible of and particularly guard against, which is, that the Directory of France have *secret agents* in *every* country they mean to destroy, who are constantly at work to disseminate their principles of *equality* and the *rights of man*, which, when effected, they attack with success, because they know that by *dividing the people* against its own government, they are sure to subvert it.

But *Englishmen*, living under a government the most *mild*, *free*, and *wise*, of any on earth, consistent with *good order* and *security*, will never barter that for *French liberty* and *contribution*, such as they have given to the rest of Europe, but convince both them and the whole world, that *Britons never will be Slaves*.

The EDITOR.

ABSTRACT OF OBSERVATIONS, &c.

AFTER stating that France had repelled her enemies by threatening to crush all the surrounding states, annexing some to herself, reducing others to an absolute subserviency to her will, and, at length, after various revolutions at home, had adopted the government for which she contended, the government of her own free choice, Mr. Harper observes.

"Why then, instead of confining herself to her own defence, has she become the assailant? Why does she refuse that peace which her enemies have over and over proposed, and whereby she would be left in possession of very large acquisitions? Why, after renouncing repeatedly, and in the most formal manner, all idea of conquest, does she still press on to new conquests, and proudly refuse even to treat for peace, unless all that she has seized be first confirmed to her, and all that she has lost be first restored?

It is on this ground that she has twice repulsed the advances of England and Austria; she has expressly refused the basis of *mutual restitution*, and declared that she would not hear any proposal resting on it. This amounts to saying, All that I have taken I will keep, and all that you have taken you shall give up, and then I will hear what you have to say.

Why does she compel all those states, whose counsels she can influence or controul, to join her in the war? Why does she strive to arm every neutral state against the commerce of the English, and to exclude their ships from every port? Why does she declare that she will never lay down her arms until she has broken and destroyed the maritime strength of England?

It is that she has formed a plan of aggrandizement at the expence of all her neighbours: that after the example of the Romans, those ferocious and systematic destroyers of mankind, she has resolved to make all Europe, and finally the whole world, bend beneath her yoke; a resolution in the accomplishment whereof she pursues the Roman policy, of dividing to destroy; of bribing one nation with the spoils of another; of inticing the stronger to inaction, reducing the weak to submission, and by the resources of the one, and the connivance of the other, breaking the strength of those whose power she dreads, and whose policy she cannot deceive.

And is this a project in which we ought to wish her success? Is it desirable that the balance of power, whereby the great nations of Europe have heretofore been mutually checked, and in some degree confined within the limits of justice and moderation, should be wholly destroyed, to make way for one uncontrouled and dispotic master, whose power being unchecked, must, from the very constitution of human nature, be constantly abused? Is this a plan which deserves the good wishes of this country? Shall we be more safe when Europe shall have been reduced under the uncontrouled influence of France, than while her power is checked and balanced by that of other nations, who will be induced by the desire of preserving that balance to shield us from her aggressions? I believe that every principle of sound policy will answer in the negative. Had France however, been content to pursue her projects of ambition in Europe, and leave us in peace, we might have been satisfied. To remain in peace, therefore, amidst the present conflict of empires, was a duty to ourselves, to posterity, and to the human race.

But France did not thus judge, nor so determine. She early saw in this country a powerful instrument for promoting her ambition, and she early formed a resolution to use it. Hence her efforts to gain the controul of our affairs: hence her unceasing endeavours to excite jealousies against the government, and divisions among the people, to blow up our animosities against England, and foment our ancient discontents. Hence those unfounded pretensions which we saw her first minister set up; pretensions which, if admitted, must have placed the affairs of this country entirely under his controul. Hence did we see him, when the government refused to yield to these pretensions, treating it with insult and outrage, and threatening to appeal from its decisions to the people. We saw him arm and commission privateers in our ports, against the express orders of the government, and send them to sea in contempt of its authority. We saw him attempt to levy an army in our country, for the purpose of invading nations with whom we were in peace. We saw him make a formal complaint against the President for refusing to convene Congress at his instance.

All this he did in the avowed pursuit of the object of his instructions, which, to use their own words, enjoined him, "to excite to the utmost the zeal of the Americans, "and induce them if possible, to make a common cause "with France."

When he was recalled on our complaining of his conduct, our warm and partial regard for France induced us to hope,

and even to believe, that the system was relinquished with the change of the Minister.

We soon however found our mistake; we found that not the object, but the mode of pursuing it had been changed; and, that instead of threats and blustering, whereby it was perceived that the plan was counteracted instead of being promoted, an artful insiduous course was adopted, more dangerous because more deceptive.

With this change in the form, the principles and substance of Genet's system were invariably pursued by his successors: the same attempts to drive us from our neutrality, under the pretence of preserving it, were renewed and incessantly repeated: his most inadmissible pretensions, those pretensions so incompatible with our sovereignty, so repugnant to our system of impartial neutrality, were renewed and unceasingly urged; and the steady refusal of our government to yield to them, with its firm resolution to persist in conducting our affairs in the manner which it conceived most conducive to our interests, and most consonant with justice towards other nations, have been made the ground of proceedings on the part of France, the most insultingly and injurious. The French Government has at length made that appeal to the people of America, which her Ministers formerly threatened. It has explained its pretensions, stated its complaints, and detailed its injuries. In revenge for those injuries, as it informs us, it has broken the treaty between the two countries, let loose its ships of war and privateers to pillage and maltreat our citizens, and has insultingly driven from its territory a Minister, sent expressly to explain and conciliate. It has declared that it will hear nothing from us, until the injuries of which it complains are redressed; or in other words, that we must submit to the terms which it shall think proper to prescribe, before it will deign to negociate, or even to converse, on the points in dispute. It has informed us that it is "terrible to its enemies."

The Directory, on the 2d of March last, published a decree, whereby our treaty with France is expressly violated in two important points, under pretence of assimilating it to that with Britain. And it is further declared, "that "every American who shall hold a commission from the "enemies of France, as well as every seaman of that na- "tion, composing the crew of the ships or vessels (of "those enemies I suppose) shall by *this fact alone* be de- "clared piratical, and treated as such, without suffering the "party to establish, that the act was the consequence of "threats or violence."

This last regulation, so worthy in bloodiness and injus-

tice, of a country whose citizens have butchered two hundred and fifty thousand women, carried infants to be drowned stuck on the points of spears, and chopped off the hands of mothers stretched out for mercy to their tender babes.

It has been proved, by judicial proceedings, that acts of this kind took place at Nantz, under the authority of the agents of the Convention. Others, equal in cruelty, happened in various other places, particularly at Lyons, Avignon, Laval, Samur, Arles, &c.

It is computed that in the year 1795, 2,000,000 of persons had been massacred in France during the revolution; of those 250,000 were women, 230,000 children, and 24,000 ministers of the Gospel! This computation, which amounts to nearly one-tenth of the whole population of France, does not include any who were killed in arms.—See a work called, "The cruelties of the Jacobins," published in Paris in 1795.—Also, "Bloody Bouy."

And are the people of America, who once generously resolved to maintain their independence, or die in the last ditch, Are you prepared to lay your country prostrate at the feet of France? Are you prepared to put your courts under the controul of her agents, violate your constitution at her orders, and tamely allow her minister. under the pretence of watching over the execution of a treaty, and of inforcing the laws of neutrality, to over-rule the legislature, dictate to the president, and assume the absolute direction of your affairs? If you be thus prepared, which I will never believe till I see it, I freely, nay proudly, declare to you that I am not, and that my voice shall never sanction this surrender of our rights and independence. Sooner would I see every ship sunk, every town in ashes, and devastation once more spread from one end of our coast to the other.

With the loss of these things we might retain our soil, our hands, our courage, our independent spirit, and our constitution; and we should be a nation still. Industry would again give us ships and towns; again might commerce gladden in our ports, and agriculture smile over our land; and our children possessing in peace and honour, the blessings which, with so many sacrifices, we had purchased, might proudly look on our graves, and say, These were our fathers! But independence once lost, is most rarely regained: such is the condition of our nature, that a nation once fallen, once reduced under a foreign rule, most rarely rises again; and where its fall proceeds, as in our case it must, not from its want of means, but its want of courage to use them, from its pusilanimity, its intrinsic weakness of character, it is destined never more to shake off the yoke.

But it may be said, is not this picture exaggerated? Can it be supposed that France, even should we yield to her present demands, would attempt to push thus far her abuse of our concessions?

Let us enquire of the Dutch, let us ask the Belgians, they can give us some useful information; and from their example, we may learn that the oppressions of France always keep pace with the weakness, the credulity, and the submissive spirit of those with whom she has to deal. Let us ask the Swiss; from them we may receive a lesson equally important, that the only means of setting bounds to her unjust and haughty pretensions, is a firm and manly opposition.

In the winter of 1794, the French armies having overrun Belgium, and being favored by the intense cold, which covered the rivers with ice, marched into Holland. On the 20th of January, a few days after their arrival, the French comissioners with the army, published a proclamation, in which they told the Dutch, "In the midst of war, we consider you as our friends and allies; it is under this name that we enter your country, we seek not to terrify, but to inspire you with confidence. It is but a few years since a tyrannic conqueror prescribed you laws; we abolish them, and restore you freedom."

"We come not to make you slaves, the French nation shall preserve to you your independence."

"Personal safety shall be secured, and property protected."

All this was very friendly, and the Dutch very good naturedly believed it, more especially as the French generals, when they were approaching the country, had constantly repeated the same thing. They, however, soon found their mistake.

Seven days after this first proclamation, the same commissioners, having now been admitted into all the towns with their troops, and obtained complete possession of the country, published a second, in which they "formally invited" the Dutch government to furnish the army, within one month, with the following supplies: viz. 200,000 quintals of wheat; 500,000 rations of hay; 200,000 rations of straw; 500,000 bushels of corn; 150,000 pair of shoes; 20,000 pair of boots; 20,000 coats and waistcoats; 40,000 pair of breeches; 150,000 pair of pantaloons, 200,000 shirts; and 50,000 hats; and besides all this 12,000 oxen, to be delivered in *two* months. This requisition they call "their *amicable* intentions," which they flatter themselves the citizens and the government will shew equal zeal to second, and in the execution whereof, they hope that "the slow

forms of ordinary administration, and all doubts about the "want of authority, which might impede the operation, "will be carefully set aside;" and they give the Dutch to understand, that in case the articles were not furnished, they should be exacted *by force*.

It was now too late to hesitate; the French had crossed the rivers, their army was in the country, and the Dutch had opened their gates to these "restorers of their liberty;" they were therefore obliged instantly to comply, and on the same day, they addressed a proclamation to the people, informing them of the demand, and directing them to furnish their respective proportions. In this proclamation, they remind the people of the "absolute necessity of fur-"nishing the supplies, without the smallest delay, and of "the distress to which they must expose themselves, if "they manifest the least unwillingness, or even procras-"tination."

This, however, was only the commencement; they subsisted their armies in Holland during the winter, took every thing they wanted, and paid in depreciated assignats at par; and finally they forced the Dutch to form an offensive and defensive alliance with them against England for ever. The treaty was signed on the 15th May, 1795. It obliges the Dutch to cede to France, "as indemnities" two of their most important frontier towns, with the adjoining territories, and one of their provinces; to admit fresh garrisons, in case of war, in that quarter, into three others of their strongest frontier towns, to admit a French garrison both in peace and war, into one of their principal sea-ports; to give France the free navigation of one of their principal rivers; to employ half their forces in carrying on the present campaign, under the command of French generals; and finally, to pay France, as a further indemnification for the expences of the war, one hundred millions of livres, equal to twenty five millions of dollars, in cash or bills of exchange on foreign countries.

In addition to this it has lately appeared from the statements made to the Dutch government by a committee of finance, that for fourteen months then last, the Dutch had paid two millions of dollars per month, amounting in the whole to twenty-eight millions, for the support of the French armies. To these two sums add the value of the first contribution which was exacted in kind, and they amount at the least to fifty-five millions of dollars; of this enormous sum have the Dutch been plundered by France, under the name of amity and alliance, in less than two years, and in addition to the immense amount of assignats they have been forced to receive, to the surrender of a

whole province, of their five strongest frontier towns, and of a principal sea-port, and to the employment of one half of their troops in the service of France.

In return for all this, the French have driven away the Stadtholder and changed the government. They have not suffered the Dutch, however, to adopt one to their own mind. A convention was called for that purpose, a great majority of which was in favor of a federal republic. The minority having opposed this plan in vain, sent two of their members to Paris to obtain the interference of the French government. The French government did interfere and the majority was forced to yield. The plan of government, which this great majority had favoured, was now rejected and a different form, more suitable to the views of France, was imposed on the nation.

The Dutch have also obtained in addition to all these proofs of amity, an offensive and defensive war with France against England, in which they have already lost all their rich possessions in the East Indies, the Cape of Good Hope, a great part of their fleet, and the remains of their trade.

The *easy conditions* granted to the Dutch were complained of in the French convention, and it was alledged, that the commissioners had not drawn from Holland all the advantages which the republic had a right to expect. The commissioners justified themselves by alledging that it would have been *impolitic* to demand harder conditions *at first*, because, in that case, the Dutch might have been driven to *resistance*.

Thus we see openly avowed and approved, the system of coaxing a nation into their power, under the pretence of rendering it services, and then plundering and oppressing it without bounds of remorse, under pretence of receiving a reward for those services: and this by a government which has talked to us of our *perfidious neutrality!*

Without entering into so minute a detail respecting Belgium, it will be sufficient to state, that the French entered this unfortunate country under repeated and solemn promises of protection and freedom; no sooner had they obtained possession by the success of their arms and the favour of the inhabitants, who were foolish enough to confide in their promises, than they put every article of property which could be of use to their armies into requisition, and compelled the people to receive payment in depreciated assignats at par. They next levied immense pecuniary contributions on all the towns; they ordered measures to be taken for compelling the people to exchange their money for assignats at par. They placed the country under the government of military commissioners: finding that a ma-

jority of the conventions, which they had assembled under the pretence of making the people free, were adverse to their views, they dissolved these conventions by force, though freely chosen by the people, and this for the express purpose, to use the words of one of their commissioners in the account of his proceedings, "of raising up the *minority*, "and destroying or counterbalancing the power of an *anti-* "*partriotic majority*."

Having thus afforded "liberty and protection" to the Belgians, having thus "broken their chains, and released "them from the yoke of their ancient tyrants," they proceeded to seize and confiscate, for their own use, the whole property of the clergy in Belgium, to the amount of more than two hundred and fifty millions of dollars.

The military government and contributions levied at the point of the bayonet still go on in this *liberated* country, for the gazettes have lately informed us of parties of horse being sent to seize the provisions of such farmers as neglected to bring them in at the orders of the commissioners.

It may also be useful to consider the example of Italy, to the people of which the French, when they invaded it, also promised liberty; they even carried on for some time the farce of a convention, at which General Bounaparte sent one of his officers with a detachment of troops to preside. Having by these means, inticed these simple people to assist them against their own government, they have lately in their treaty with the Pope stipulated, that these provinces which belonged to them, shall not be made free, but *be ceded to France*. In the mean time they plundered the churches and the cities, stript the country, to which they had promised freedom, of its wealth by enormous contributions, and compelled the militia to join their armies. Besides the territory which they compelled the Pope to relinquish, they exacted from him upwards of six millions of dollars, and many of his most valuable effects, and forced him to receive a French garrison into one of his sea-port towns.

Thus it is that France deals with countries which she can intice or compel into her grasp. Let us see how she acts towards such as are willing and able to resist.

The Swiss being neighbours to France, and having resolved, according to their usual policy, to remain neuter, in the present war, she early began as she has done in our case, to claim the right of directing their affairs under the pretence of inforcing the observance of *treaties*, and of the laws of *neutrality*. The Swiss, as we have done, for a long time, bore with her through a love of peace, but still, though in the mildest terms, repelled her pretensions. Em-

boldened by this moderation on their part, and by seeming compliances into which they had been led by their anxiety to avoid a quarrel, she increased in her demands, and at length formally required them to drive from their territory the numerous French emigrants who had taken refuge there, and were residing peaceably under the protection of their laws. The asylum granted by them to these unfortunate exiles, deprived of their all, and hunted by the implacable vengeance of France from country to country, was declared by her to be "a breach of neutrality." The Swiss resolved not to yield this essential point of their sovereignty, but unwilling to refuse directly, for some time evaded the matter; France persisted, called their evasions, "outrages "and ridiculous delay;" asked them how they "dared to "hold a conduct so reprehensible," and demanded, *without delay*, "a frank and amicable," explanation, which might dispel her doubts, and restore "their state to her senti- "ments of good will."

The Swiss made a firm reply, marked, however, with great moderation, and shewing a wish still to evade the question, rather than give a direct and pointed refusal.

But this did not satisfy France: she returned to the charge. Her ministers tells the Swiss, "I conceive it my "duty, agreeable to my INSTRUCTIONS, to request formally "from you, that you will banish from your territory all "descriptions of those strangers so dangerous to the tran- "quility of France and of Switzerland, as well those "whom a *false pity* has hitherto tolerated, as those who may "hereafter take refuge there. They cannot any longer "prolong their stay there, without injuring that confi- "dence which ought to subsist between two nations, one "of which cannot grant an asylum to (the enemies of) "the other, without essentially affecting the duties of "neutrality. The directory *demands and expects* from your "friendship, that listening only to your true and solid in- "terests, you will drive from among you the emigrants and "French priests.—Your wisdom will appreciate the ex- "*treme and pressing* importance of this request."

The Swiss, however, were resolved to judge themselves of what "their true and solid interests" required; and finding that moderation only invited new insults, and that there was nothing left for them but to submit, or firmly and plainly assert their rights, they replied, that they themselves were the judges of the interests of their country; that they were desirous of avoiding offence to France, and had given none: that those emigrants and priests were peaceable exiles, whose misfortunes as well as their virtues and good conduct, gave them a claim to the asylum, which they had re-

ceived in the Swiss territory: that far from plotting against the interests of France, as she had alledged, these exiles were honestly and peaceably labouring for their bread: that they had received in Switzerland the rights of hospitality, which no duty, of a neutral nation, forbid it to grant, and that in these rights the Swiss were resolved, at all hazards, to protect them.

This reply put an end to the dispute: France perceiving that the Swiss were resolved not to yield, and that, considering their warlike character and the situation of their country, an attempt to force them would be attended with hazard and difficulty, she wisely determined to give up the point. The emigrants remained; and after all this blustering, she left the Swiss quietly to manage their own affairs.

From these various examples, my fellow-citizens, we may learn the consequences to be expected from submission, and from resistance; we may learn that to make the concessions now demanded, would only embolden her in new requisitions, to be constantly extended in proportion as we should betray a disposition to yield; whereas the true and only method of repelling or preventing aggression, is to shew by our conduct that we are resolved, at all hazards, to maintain the exclusive and uncontrouled direction of our own affairs. Before she will desist from her attempts, we we must convince her that in this resolution we are firm and united. Till then, she will continue to require from us, as she now does, the sacrifice of our interests and self-government at the shrine of her own ambition.

But it will be impossible to understand fully the views of France in this country, without attending a little to her projects in Europe.

It is perfectly well known, that she long since formed, and still pursues with the most steady perseverance, a system of aggrandizement in Europe, for ensuring the success of which, it is absolutely essential that the maritime power of England should be reduced. Germany opposed barriers to her by land, which were also to be removed. Accordingly Germany was to be divided, and a maritime coalition formed against England. Of this coalition the United States were to form an important part.

In the mean time, the plan went on in Europe, and was pursued with varying success, but undeviating perseverance: nor did it receive the least check or alteration from the frequent changes of government in France. Various factions wished to rule at home, and in their struggles for power, slaughtered each other without remorse or forbearance: but they all had the same object as to their neighbours; and that object was aggrandizement to France at their expence.

They began with Germany, which being nearest to them, it was necessary first to cripple. They considered it likewise as the most vulnerable, by the two weapons wherewith they meant to assail all Europe. Those weapons were *division and insurrection*. Mr. Fauchet, in his intercepted dispatch, has informed us, that France had an eye to the use that might be made of them here also.

Germany is composed of a great number of independent powers, some of them very inconsiderable, and all held very loosely together by a kind of league, at the head of which is the Emperor. Austria, which composes the peculiar dominions of the Emperor, is by far the most powerful of the Germanic states, and possessed also of very extensive dominions out of Germany, especially in Italy and Belgium. Prussia comes next, which, though formerly inconsiderable, was raised by the talents and long reign of the late king to a very high pitch of power and importance. This power regards itself as the rival of Austria, against which it entertains a jealousy mixt with resentment and dread. These two great powers mutually balance and controul each other in the affairs of Germany; and the smaller states adhere some to the one, and some to the other, as general policy or particular motives may happen to dictate.

It is easy to see how abundantly the seeds of division are sown in this system. These were also circumstances which seemed to favor the plan of exciting insurrection.

All the governments of Germany, except a few towns, were arbitary in their form; and some of them very oppressive in their practice: and although the apparent vices of these governments were greatly corrected by mild customs and fixt laws for the security of person and property, which could not easily be violated; yet there, as in all other countries where a vast population, and its certain consequence, great inequality of conditions, have taken place, there were great numbers, who possessing little, and obliged to gain their subsistence by constant labour, would naturally look with an eye of discontent on the wealth and privileges of the superior classes. It was by this description of people that France meant to work. It was by exciting them to insurrection, that the persons who then directed her affairs had enslaved their own country, after overturning a government established by free and general consent; and it was by the same engine that they intended to subjugate Germany, having first subverted and trampled under foot those governments whereby her force had been united and directed.

Those who had nothing were to be the instruments abroad, as they had been at home; and they were to be set to work by pointing to the plunder of those who had something.

Their exertions were to be aided by large bodies of French troops drawn to the frontiers, and held in readiness to profit by circumstances. To repel some small assemblages of French emigrants, whom the Emperor himself had compelled to disperse, was the pretext for these armaments; meanwhile every expedient of fraud and dissimulation was used to lull the vigilance of the German states, and enflame their resentments and jealousies against each other.

The French carried this dissimulation so far, as to assure the Emperor, that they abhorred the idea of exciting commotions; and when England afterwards complained of their measures for this purpose, they assured her, that those measures were not meant to affect her, but were *exclusively intended against Austria and Prussia!* See the correspondence.

Nothing can be more incontestable than the position, that France was the aggressor in the present war. Any one who will read the correspondence between the courts of France and Vienna, will find that before the Austrians and Prussians began to arm, or took any hostile measures of any kind, France threatened and alarmed Germany, and the Low Countries, by military preparations on their frontiers. This was not denied by France; but she justified it under various pretexts. One was, the necessity of repelling the emigrants. But the forces collected were ten, perhaps twenty times more numerous than the emigrants who were collecting in arms. The Emperor had, moreover, forbidden them to assemble in arms on his territory. He had actually compelled them to disperse; and had induced the German princes in the neighbourhood of France to adopt the same system. Some small corps of emigrants did, notwithstanding, remain in arms in different places, but not on the Emperor's territories; and they were too inconsiderable to give any alarm to France. Another pretext was, the convention of Pilnitz; but this convention was in its very nature defensive and eventual. It was an agreement between the Emperor and king of Prussia, that if either of them should experience those attacks from France wherewith they were threatened, they would assist each other; and, moreover, that they would protect the king of France from personal violence. They did not arm in support of this convention; and, as soon as the king gave his assent to the constitution, and declared himself free, they suspended the convention by a public declaration. Another pretext was, that the Emperor had sent additional troops into some of his frontier dominions, and had directed one of his generals to march to the assistance of a certain German prince should he be attacked. But the Emperer had a right, and was also bound, to assist

the German states if attacked; and, as to the additional troops, they did not exceed four thousand, the usual compliment of recruits sent annually to his peace establishment in that quarter; while France had drawn a large army to the same quarter. These facts were stated on the part of Austria in the correspondence, and not denied by France. A fourth pretext was, that the Emperor gave protection to the emigrants; but he gave them an asylum only and hospitality, with an express prohibition to arm on his territories. France demanded of him to reduce his troops, while she expressly refused to reduce hers, to drive away the emigrants, and to abandon the convention of Pilnitz; and because he refused to comply with these demands, she declared war against him. The same happened with respect to Prussia.

The French minister who was at Vienna, when the war broke out, declared it as his opinion, *that the system of the Emperor was pacific.* Mr. De Lessarts, who was minister for foreign affairs in France at the same time, and who carried on the correspondence which preceded the war against Austria and Prussia, wrote a letter afterwards to Mr. Neckar, in which he declares, "that it was clear to demonstration, that they (the Austrians and Prussians) were unwilling to make war against France; that it was evident from unanswerable proof, that France provoked them to hostilities, and set all Europe against her." See Neckar's Address to the French people in behalf of Louis the sixteenth, wherein this letter from De Lessarts is cited.

The testimony of Brissot to the same point, will perhaps be thought worthy by some of more credit. When accusing the French king in the convention, of want of fidelity to the nation, he charged him with *unwillingness to attack Austria*, and exclaimed, "we," meaning himself and his "party, "compelled him to declare war, in order to put "him to the test." After the king was dethroned, Brissot justified the war, and took the credit of it to himself and his friends. "Without the war," says he in his gazette of September 22d, 1792, "the revolution of the 10th of "August would never have taken place; without the war, "France would never have been a republic;" and, in his Address to his Constituents, page 56, he declares, "that "the war with Austria was forced on France by outrages "and threats, and that to ensure success she was *obliged to* "*begin it.*" It has already appeared what these "outrages "and threats" were; and we have the testimony of Brissot himself, that it was not by them that the war with Austria was rendered necessary, though they were used as the pretexts. It was to bring about the revolution of the 10th of

August; to give the Brissotine party arms, wherewith they might destroy the king and constitution, and afterwards rule the nation under the pretence of establishing a republic. In the mean time, it being clear that every man's testimony is good against himself, we must believe on that of Brissot, that he and his party *began the war against Austria*.

As to Holland, they declared war against her, without ceremony or pretence; except that seeing her frontiers approached by war, she had taken some precautions purely defensive. They even violated her acknowledged rights before she began those precautions.

With respect to *England*, it is perfectly certain that France was the aggressor; besides the facts and papers which speak for themselves, the point is established by the positive testimony of three French writers, all well informed, and two of whom acted a very considerable part in the revolution and in the war. These are Calonne, Brissot, and Dumourier; all of whom affirm that France attacked England. Brissot was a leading member of the convention at that time, and when he was afterwards brought to the block, one of the charges against him was his having been the author of the attack. He replied, that Robespierre's party were the authors of it: but he did not say that France was not the aggressor, which would have been a complete justification. On the contrary, he asserted that France was the aggressor most unwisely, and that Robespierre's party had induced her to become so. In his Appeal to his Constituents, he says the same thing over and over: in this Appeal, page 47, he expressly asserts, that England *did not begin to arm till three months after France*. He also says, page 60, that a "determination had been made to brave all Europe."

In October, 1792, the Convention, as appears by the same authority, had ordered formidable naval equipments to be made *in expectation of a war with the maritime powers*. This was previous to most, if not all, of those acts on the part of England, which France made the grounds of her declaration of war.

Dumourier loudly charges the Convention with having driven England into the war, which he repeatedly declares might easily have been avoided. See his Life, 3d vol. containing the history of his campaigns.

It must at the same time be admitted, that although the combined powers were attacked and driven into the war in their own defence, yet, when they found themselves engaged in it, and began to entertain projects of success, they also began to form prospects of aggrandizement at the expence of France. It is also highly probable that most of the powerful governments became very little averse from

war, when they found reason to suppose that France, by her internal commotions, and the universal indignation which the execution of the king and the murders at Paris had excited against her, had become an easy prey. It is not, however, the less true, that France began the war, particularly against Holland and England, which for a long time shewed every appearance of desiring peace.

The declaration of war was April 20th, 1792. The Duke of Brunswick did not begin his march from Coblentz till July 27th, 1792.

We have already seen what kind of friendship it was which they had for the Belgians, and how the chains of this deluded people have been broken. They have been plundered of every thing they possessed to relplenish the treasury of France, drained of all their resources to support her armies, and are now subject to a military government.

England for a while was let alone. It was not the season yet for attacking her, till Austria and Prussia should be exhausted, Holland subjugated, and Belgium annexed to France. The maritime coalition, moreover, had not yet been formed; consequently the plan against England was not yet ripe. Correspondence in the mean time was kept up with the revolutionists in England and Ireland! open encouragement was held out to them, and their deputations had public audiences from the French convention.

The British government was alarmed at these measures. It also took umbrage at the proceedings in Belgium, and the attacks made on Holland, with which last it was in alliance. It complained of these attacks, and of the decrees whereby the Convention had made a formal promise of support to the insurgents of every country. The Convention justified the attacks on Holland, and assured England that the decrees had been misunderstood; that they meant nothing at which any government ought to be offended, and were only to be executed in cases where a whole people having resolved to change their government, should call for the assistance of France. On the same day when these assurances were made, the Convention sent commissioners into Belgium to execute those decrees, with instructions to "treat as enemies all persons, *and even whole countries*, "which should refuse to alter their governments according "to her will."

England in the mean time, justly considering these explanations as deceptive and unsatisfactory, went on with her preparations for the defence of herself and her ally. France required her to desist; and when she refused, and sent away a minister who employed himself in exciting sedition, war was declared against her. This war many of the politicians

of France condemned *because it was declared too soon*: and yet they confessed that France had begun to arm for it three months before England.

If any are in doubt of all this, or ignorant of it, they are requested to read the correspondences between France and Austria, those between England and France, the speeches and reports of Brissot, and his Address to his Constituents, and the relation published by Chaussard, one of the commissioners for executing the decrees in Belgium, wherein he gives an account of his own proceedings, and explains the plans of the Convention. The reply to Brissot's Address by Camille Desmoulins, in behalf of the Robesperrian party, should also be consulted; and Neckar's, Address to the French in behalf of Louis the sixteenth. Brissot in one of his letters, delares, "we, the French, must set fire to the four corners of Europe." Camille Desmoulins, in his reply, asserts, "that to *disorganize Europe* was one of the sublime "vocations of the Convention." Brissot, in his address, asks "what did enlightened Republicans wish before the 10th of August? (the day when the king was dethroned.) Men who "wished "for liberty not only for their own country, but for all "Europe? They beleived that they could generally establish it, *by exciting the governed against the governors, and "letting the people see the facility and advantage of such insurrections.*" But Chaussard explains himself, and developes the system most fully. "No doubt," says he, "it "was the interest of France to raise and secure *by conquest* the trade of the Belgic provinces, so crampt by that "of Holland; and thence to threaten and alarm the United Provinces, to place our assignats on the very desks "of their counting houses, *there to ruin the bank of England*, "and in short, to complete the revolution of the money "system. It was the interest of France to monopolize, as "it were, these vast implements of trade, these manufactories of national prosperity. It was the interest of "France to weaken her mortal enemy (the Emperor) to "cramp his efforts *to aggrandize herself with his spoils*: in "short, to mutilate the Colossus of Austria, by rending "from him these fertile provinces of Belgium, for obtaining and securing the possession of which, he has, for ages, "been lavish of gold, of blood, and of intrigues."

Thus also it was the interest of France to mutilate the Colossus of England, by rending from him the colonies in America. And yet she tells us, and the Belgians, of her *disinterested services* in giving our independence.

"England and Prussia," continues Chaussard, in the words of a speech which had been delivered in the Con-

vention, and approved of by it, "know very well that "France had the greatest interest to substitute a popular "and representative government for the aristocratic and "degenerate one that actually exists in Holland; that *with* "*the forces* of that country, France would *irrecoverably* "*destroy the trade of England*, and by means of her navy "soon command the Baltic; that all that would be wanting "would be the renewal in that part of the North, of an "alliance of situation then become necessary; and, that an "intimate union between France and Holland being once "formed, *the supremacy of the English trade, both in the East* "*and West Indies, would rapidly disappear;* while Prussia on "her side would irrecoverably lose, sooner or later, all her "possessions in Westphalia."

Here the plan stands confessed. The Emperor was to be stripped in Belgium, and the king of Prussia in Westphalia. The bank of England was to be ruined by operations in Holland, and a popular government substituted in that country, in order to place its forces under the direction of France; and with these forces, aided by her own, France was to destroy, irrecoverably, the trade of England in Europe, and make its supremacy both in the East and West Indies rapidly disappear. And all this was to be effected, by setting fire to the four corners of Europe, and exciting the people every where to insurrection against the government. It must be confessed that a project so atrocious in its end, and so abominable in its means, has never been conceived before, not even by the Romans.

While all this was going on, the Convention, in order to hoodwink England, was making to her the most solemn assurances of pacific intentions. It even carried its dissimulation to the almost incredible length of requesting the mediation of England to bring about a peace with Prussia and the Emperor.

A further and a very strong confirmation of these points is found in the date of the instructions to Genet, the manifest object of which was to bring the United States into a war against Great Britain. These instructions were signed January 3d, 1793; the supplementary instructions, January 17th, 1793; Mr. Chauvelin was ordered to quit England, January 24th, 1793; and war was declared against England, February 1st, 1793. If this dismissal was the occasion of the war, as France alledged, why those instructions before the dismissal? Had France been disposed for peace, as she alledged, would she, on account of this dismissal, have declared war within six days after it took place?

And yet there are men, men too of talents and infor-

nation, who remain blind to all this! Who, while France was openly forming projects of empire against all her neighbours, and openly pressing forward their execution, by every mean of artifice and force, believed that she was injured and attacked, because in the face of her own acts she said so! From a late pamphlet, published by Mr. Erskine, and containing an ingenious and plausible apology for the English opposition, it appears, that he and his friends in Parliament, who certainly have high pretensions to ability and information, are still persisting in this error of regarding only the *declarations* of France, and wholly overlooking her *actions*.

Belgium has in the mean time been over-run, and Holland has been subdued, partly by force and partly by division: for France openly and avowedly raised up and supported a party against the government in the bosom of the country, which was powerfully instrumental in promoting her views. Spain also, too feeble and spiritless to defend itself, sunk under the arms of France, and has been compelled to join her in the war.

In this situation, France finding her schemes opposed only by the vast maritime power of England, and the unbroken courage and constancy of Austria, formed the resolution of destroying the commerce of England, thereby to cut off her pecuniary resources, and sap the foundation of her naval strength. This plan rendered the co-operation of the United States more important to her than ever; for she considers us as one of England's best customers, and consequently as the nation which contributes most to the support of her commerce, her manufactures, and her wealth. Our situation too in the neighbourhood of the West Indies, our abundance of provisions and of warlike and naval stores, and the great number of our ships and seamen, would enable us to be very hurtful to England in war, as well as very useful in peace. By such a war, indeed we should suffer greatly; but that is no part of the care of France.

Accordingly she has unceasingly renewed, and pressed with greater and greater eagerness, her indirect attempts to bring us into the war. Foreseeing that her hopes of success would be greatly lessened, if not wholly destroyed by the treaty, she opposed it with all her might, and in all its stages. Even the unconstitutional opposition to it in the House of Representatives, she aided by every means in her power. Finding all her attempts finally frustrated, her vexation and ill humour no longer knew any bounds, and she resolved to try different means for effecting what she had in vain essayed to bring about by intrigue.

This is the true spring of her conduct, that her anger at

the British treaty does not arise from any of its particular provisions, but from its general tendency to preserve peace between this country and Great Britain, is proved in the most manifest manner by the conduct she pursues at this moment towards other neutral nations who have made no treaties with England. She has long threatened Portugal with invasion by the Spaniards, unless she would shut her ports against the English. She has lately required Hamburgh and Bremen to break off all commerce with England, and on their refusal has recalled her minister from Hamburgh. She has made the same demand on Denmark; and even required the Danes to block up the mouth of the Elbe, a river not in their territories, against the English. We have not heard the pretext for these demands, which Denmark has pointedly refused; but no doubt they were founded on the French construction of *the laws of neutrality*; the same laws whereby, according to France, the Swiss were bound to drive the emigrants from their territories, and we to permit her to raise armies, equip ships of war, and sell prizes in ours.

That such is the real project of France and the true source of her anger at the British treaty, is further proved by the testimony of General Pinckney, who having travelled through a great part of France, and continued near two months in Paris, had the best means of penetrating their views. In his letter from Paris, February 1st, 1797, he says, "I most ardently wish that we would banish all party "distinctions and foreign influence; and think and act only "as Americans—for all parties in this country (France) "unite in thinking that we ought to act *as if we were alto-* "*gether their dependents*, and indebted to them solely, and "not to our exertions, for our liberty and independence. "*Hence*, our treaty with Great Britain is here generally "execrated; and our having *any kind of commercial connex-* "*ion* with that country, *even if the treaty had not been made*, "would, I believe, have been disliked. They wish to de- "stroy the trade of England, and they look upon us as one "of her best customers; *and to obtain their object they care* "*not what they suffer.*"

This is the testimony of a man remarkable for the warmth of his good wishes towards France, and who, if he did not dislike the British treaty, certainly never said a word in its favor. From his testimony, as well as evidence of their own conduct, it manifestly appears, that their dislike to the treaty does not proceed, as they pretend, from any stipulations in it injurious to them, but from its tendency to preserve an amicable intercourse between us and England.

The united force of all these considerations, drawn from

the instructions to the ministers of France in this country, and their conduct here, from the plain and direct tendency of the measures which she wished us to adopt, from the nature of her plans in Europe, and from her recent conduct towards the neighbouring powers, establish in the most incontrovertible manner the opinion, that her object always has been to draw us into the war. This point is still further confirmed by another event. It has been proposed through the Dutch, to our minister at Holland, as appears by his letter of November 4th, 1796, that we should make *common cause* with France and Holland against England, in order to compel her to relinquish the right of taking her enemies' goods on board of neutral ships, and "to restore peace to "the two hemispheres.

Such in my opinion, my fellow-citizens, are the objects of France in her present measures towards this country; and I am firmly persuaded, that the only method of inducing her to abandon those measures, is to convince her, by our conduct, that they will not be effectual: to convince her by firm, united, and vigorous measures, that her opinions, respecting us, are erroneous; and, that we are determined, at all hazards, and under any possible sacrifice, to maintain our rights, repel unjust attacks, and seek reparation for injuries wantonly committed: that we are not a feeble, pusillanimous, or divided people, opposed to our own government, and ready to acquiesce in, or aid the interference of foreigners in our affairs. We ought to shew them, at the same time, that while we are resolved to repel injury, we are willing to make every reasonable advance towards a just accommodation: That while we prepare firmly and vigorously for war, we are desirous of cultivating peace, as long as any hope of preserving it remains: that although we mean to appeal firmly to the sword, if driven to that extremity, we shall make the appeal with reluctance and regret.

Should any ask what are the sacrifices we must incur by a war, and what are our means of becoming formidable to France? I would answer that, as to sacrifices, the greatest we can make is that of our rights and independence; that war is an evil always to be avoided, but infinitely less than national degradation, and submission to the will of a foreign power; that every possible loss of property and lives may be repaired by time and industry, if we preserve our honor and our government; but that these once lost, can never be restored; in fine that a nation which weighs its purse against its rights, never fails in the end to lose bot one and the other.

To shew that we will submit to injuries for fear of loss,

amounts to bribing foreign nations with our own money to insult and attack us.

And I would answer, in fine, in the words of a celebrated writer, "*that where courage is not wanting, all other means* "*will be found or created.*"

Thus far are generally stated the facts and observations of Mr. HARPER, grounded upon what he *then* knew to be transacting in his own country, and what had occurred in Europe.

But he little imagined that the harmless unfortunate Swiss, whose conduct and spirit he has noticed with so much applause, would so soon have fallen a sacrifice to French ambition and domination. They are, indeed, a melancholy instance, among many others, of the fatal intrigues of that government, whose sole maxim has been, throughout Europe, and too successfully to their cost, to *divide* and *destroy*; to accomplish this, no means whatever, be they ever so base or destructive to the happiness of mankind, have they neglected to employ. With them the *ends* sanctions the *means*. The most delusive principles and promises of freedom and protection have been solemnly proclaimed and acted upon, until they obtained possession of the unfortunate country they meant to despoil. This once effected, the liberty and freedom they held up to the people, have universally turned out to be *plunder* and *slavery*. Taking advantage of the *disunion* and *discontents*, they have *secretly* created in all countries through their agents, they have employed one against the other, and in succession, either coaxed or subjugated them all to their purposes. Thus the Italian states have been separately cut up and plundered, even to Rome itself, with the old reverend Pope at its head. A great part of Germany has been already made integral parts of the French Republic, up to the Rhine, as their present pretended boundary, and though professing to have no views of conquest, or making any additions to France, they have uniformly gone on conquering and to conquer. What can this be called, but ambition and the lust of power *universal?* Britain may be thankful that there is a formidable channel of sea between us and them, and that we are guarded by a watchful and powerful navy, or we should have been long before this, some of the chosen departments of that Republic. We have also to be thankful for that wise and vigilant administration which presides over us, and for its early attention in *foreseeing* and *guarding* against the impending ruin. It is from this early wisdom and caution in our rulers we have to boast that we exist as a nation; and that amidst the war of elements, and the crush of worlds,

we yet remain pure in our freedom, our constitution and government; that while almost all Europe is unhinged and torn up by the roots, plundered and enslaved, this little island is, of itself, able to withstand the general convulsion, preserve its name, its greatness, its manufactures, its commerce and independance; and, perhaps, reserved, as a chosen people in the councils of heaven, to be the future means of curbing the insolent spirit and views of the aspiring Republic of France, and thereby ensure peace, order and security to the world. An idea, than which there cannot be one more extatic and blissful to a people calling themselves, and proudly so, a *christian* and *independent* nation.

Had the poor Swiss, and so it may be said of many other countries and states, been less anxious to preserve a fatal neutrality, and had, in time, taken an open active part to secure themselves against French principles and perfidy, they might still have been free and independent; but permitting their arts of *corruption* and *disunion* to creep in among them, they have been lost; and though some of them made an honorable and noble effort to save themselves at last, it was too late; and that very effort is now made a pretext, with the French directory, for dictating to the cantons a new form of government, and the severest contributions.

It is natural to suppose that the inhuman conduct of the French officers and soldiers towards the peasants of Suabia, during the invasion of Germany in 1796, as described in a late pamphlet, translated from the German by Anthony Aufrere, Esq. and since abridged, would have been such a lesson to the Germans and Swiss, as to have put them on their guard, but it seems necessary to conviction, that misfortunes are first to be *felt* and *experienced*, before they can produce wisdom and caution.

Let this not be said of Britons! We stand as the *last* mark of French destruction; and as the only power remaining they have to subdue, in order to possess and govern the world. Once conquer *Old England*, say they, and we have all the rest at our feet. That proud Isle, its navy and commerce, are all we have to subjugate. *Invasion* is the word, and aided by the thousands of disaffected, which the Corresponding Society assure us of, say they, there is no doubt of success! and that we shall reduce that haughty nation to the *blessed freedom of slavery*.

From the latest and best accounts received by government, there is no doubt that they seriously mean to make the attempt. Their military fame is pledged, and what is more to them, their interest; for it is on the plunder of

this country, held up to their armies, they can only expect to pay them. If they fail in the attempt, their army, they hope, may never return; should neither succeed, then have the present rulers of France reason to tremble. Our safety therefore necessarily depends upon *union* and *vigour*. It is for *Britons* to determine, whether they will be *free*, or slaves to France.

FINIS.

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